

IN SEARCH FOR NATIVE COMMUNICATION: IGWEBUIKE AND SHIKROT PHILOSOPHICAL RENDERINGS

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Executive Summary

The ancients developed their modes of communication which helped them to relate with one another and communicate with the divine. These forms of communication also distinguished them from others while providing meaning about life and the eternal destiny of man. Unfortunately, the arrival of the colonialists and the advent of the Internet with its razzmatazz of new media expressions showed an exit door to native media. This qualitative study, "In Search for Native Communication: Igwebuike and Shikrot Philosophical Renderings" investigated the matter with the help of Native Theory of Communication theoretical framework. While dissemination of information, public relations and entertainment were found as native forms of communication in Igbo philosophy, it was discovered that being persuasive, active listening and saying the truth are elements of communication in Ngas culture. The paper recommended revamping African traditional education, embracing public relations and encouraging divine encounter as veritable ways of inculcating traditional values of community among people of the two cultures. It concluded that notwithstanding the use of the new media, if various forms of communication are married to newer expressions, Africans are capable of finding solutions to contemporary challenges in an African way.

Keywords: Communication, Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony, Native, *Igwebuike*, *Shikrot*.

Introduction

Before the arrival of White imperialists to Africa, the people of the continent used oral tradition as a vital vehicle for information gathering, sharing and worship. While living their normal lives, they cultivated, built, ate, sang, danced, healed their sick, created and communicated through various modes such as incantation (Duru, 2016). Most importantly, language which has also been a veritable tool for communication, alongside other linguistic forms of communication among *Homo Sapiens*, was employed through sound and the acoustic effects they produced (Ahamefula & Odii, 2014). This meant that the people crafted their modes of communication and attached meaning to them. These traditional forms of communication were part and parcel of the people's philosophy. For example, the Igbos of the South East and Ngas people of North Central Nigeria enjoyed rich communication values which helped the people to distinguish themselves and fulfill their destiny.

However, the advent of the digital age with all its attractions seems to have pushed these erstwhile local media to the background. Worse still, for Africans, traditional or native forms of communication which made a lot of sense to people are gradually being replaced by digital formats. The coming of the Internet plus Smartphone technology is also truncating the traditional forms of human interaction. In societies where having a meal together, sharing banter with friends, telling children stories under the moon light and other indigenous types of communication are gradually being faced out, the implication is that interpersonal, intrapersonal, group and extra-communication are now considered as older ways of communication. What is now trending is surfing the Internet and communicating through various social media platforms, like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Emails, to mention a few.

The ease with which information is now being transmitted creates an instantaneous sensation of satisfaction. Because social media is characterized by speed, media convergence and interactivity, it creates a feeling that these media can perfectly replace older forms of human communication. In a bid to embrace this new technology, Africans now stand the risk of missing out on sharing common meals, going out to enjoy traditional dance in the village square, bonding as an extended family or members of the same kindred or paying regular visits to friends and family. This is because new media could provide an avenue to contact them. Inspired by this anomaly, this qualitative research aims at:

1. Presenting a resume' of the Igbos of the South East in juxtaposition with the Ngas people of North Central Nigeria;
2. Investigating native communication in *Igwebuike* philosophy;
3. Exploring traditional communication in *Shikrot* philosophical outlook;
4. Searching for common grounds regarding native communication in *Igwebuike* and *Shikrot* philosophical thoughts, and;
5. Stimulating academics (media scholars and philosophers) to encourage the young not to lose their *Africanness* in a digital age which seems to supply all things Western.

Conceptual Analysis

Native Communication

Also known as traditional or trado-rural communication, native communication is communication from an African perspective. It is a kind of communication which starts from a person's birth to his death, as it affects every aspect of life. Africans communicate with themselves, their neighbours, the deities, ancestors, and God. It consists of both verbal and non-verbal cues. In the context of

Igwebuiké (Igbo) and Shikrot (Ngas) philosophies, this means the transmission of essential values which catapults the worldviews of these people towards appreciation by others (Dyikuk, 2019) and finding local solutions to African problems.

***Igwebuiké* Philosophy**

Igwebuiké, which simply means “number is strength” or “number is power,” is at the heart of African philosophy. It is the idea that when human beings form a united front, their solidarity and complementarity becomes an unbreakable union, such that nothing can defeat their collective resolve (Kanu, 2016a & b). As the lungs or vital organ of Igbo tradition, *Igwebuiké* is a driver of communication as it engenders complementarity, harmony and communality. It is the philosophy of the Igbo people which helps them in transmitting values, mores and customs.

As the mechanism for ensuring complementarity, harmony and communalism in the community, *Igwebuiké* brings about unity and synergy between the Igbos at home and those in diaspora. It is the core or underlying principle of African philosophy and a manner of being in African ontology, which translates as complementarity, harmony and communality. The worldview persuades everyone in the community to work towards corporate existence by creating a situation where “we” becomes lauder than “I” (2015 & 2016c&d).

Although the community means much to the individual, it does not suppress him/her, as the individual’s talents do not constitute any threat to the society. *Igwebuiké* unites all and gives hope that the future is full of meaning. It argues that it is the community that gives meaning to a person’s existence based on his/her identity (Kanu, 2017 & 2018a). Here, the family and community which the individual belongs to are indisputable and inevitable. The community-oriented philosophy posits that life and living makes meaning because of the community (Kanu, 2016 & 2018b). This philosophy takes cognizance

of divine and human realities, methods of traditional education and native communication as invaluable ways of transmitting Igbo culture.

Shikrot Philosophy

Literally translated as “talk of love,” *Shikrot* philosophy encapsulates the religious, political and socio-cultural life of the Ngas people of Plateau State. It includes the philosophy, ethics and behavioural patterns as well as the cultural-ideology of the people. As the worldview which helps them to raise the stakes, *Shikrot* philosophy provides that Ngas sons and daughters should be knitted in love and also live out values such as truthfulness, straightforwardness, honesty, heroism, accountability and ingenuity. Notwithstanding the barrier between the *nkarang* (bona fide citizens) and *nlap* (foreigners), this philosophy invites all to love unconditionally (Dyikuk, 2008 & Dyikuk, 2019).

Based on the communitarian dimension of *Shikrot*, the people exuded the spirit of charity and solidarity, sharing their farmlands with members of the kindred and close allies. “Built on love, communalism and a high sense of fellow-feeling, *Shikrot* philosophy reveals the various forms of communication in the society. It also showcases the revered culture of the people such as their mores, customs and traditions. Because the community emphasizes a communitarian way of life, it frowned at those who had rebellious tendencies” (Dyikuk, 2019,p.5). The same author opines that from manhood training which was based on circumcision (*Vwang*) to naming and wedding ceremonies and funerals, native communication was used as a vehicle of communicating values and customs. Comedians (clowns), town criers, messengers, dancers and musicians had a crucial role to play in the community as they served as conveyors of information, masters of ceremony, consolers and producers of comic relief.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Native Theory of Communication as theoretical framework. This indigenous theory engenders collaborative decision-making processes about socioeconomic and environmental sustainability as well as diverse stakeholder interests in various communities and organizations (Deetz, 2020). The theory makes case for a culture-bound development that is all-round, which meets the needs of the people and attempts answers to the puzzles of life. Native Theory of Communication is a 21st century assumption which argues that an African model of communication should be developed by Africans for Africans, which takes into the cognizance the culture, norms, mores, values, traditions as well as wishes and aspirations of the people towards finding home-grown solutions to problems.

As a theory which engenders integral development, it insists that for “Africans to freely communicate with themselves and find lasting solutions to the issues that affect them, both capitalist post-colonialism and neo-colonialism with their ingredients of hierarchical and linear approaches to governance must be kept at the back door. An erstwhile linear model of communication must necessarily give way to a grassroots, people - oriented or participatory model of communication which indicates that power belongs to the people; something akin to strict principles of democratic governance” (Dyikuk, 2018,p.15). This theory is in tandem with the study because native communication is key to revitalizing the African philosophical worldview in the light of *Igwebuike* and *Shikrot* renderings.

Literature Review and Discussion

Igbos of South Eastern Nigeria: A Synopsis

The Igbos have a very rich history - Igboid languages are said to have originated from Volta–Niger family. As one of the biggest and most inflectional ethnic groups in Nigeria with about 40 million people throughout Nigeria, they have an ancient and well-organised culture.

The well-urbanized ethnic group lives in Igbo land, which consists of such cities like Onitsha, Owerri, Nnewi, Okigwe, Aba and Orlu. They have a variety of dialects and were predominantly farmers, traders and craftsmen. Their style of pottery is traced back to 2500 BCE. Genetic research finds them close to Niger-Congo-speaking peoples (Agu, 2020 & Adeboyejo, 2018).

According to one school of thought, the Igbos originated from the Nri Kingdom where Eri, a king-figure, held sway. Although the Nri Kingdom was theocratic in nature, the people practiced a quasi-democratic governance without centralized states. Scholars put the five groups of Igbo people as Northern Igbos, Western Igbos, Igbos of North-Eastern Nigeria, Igbos of South-Eastern Nigeria and Igbos of Eastern Nigeria. Another school of thought traces Igbo roots to ancient Hebrews. It is believed that they migrated from the Middle East to their present ancestral home. A third version simply suggests that the tribe originated from ancient Orlu or Awka towns (Agu, 2020 & Adeboyejo, 2018).

Unlike other cultures, the Igbos did not have a centralized system of government. They had title holders who were respected for their achievements, but were not revered as kings. They had a traditional republican system of government that is consultative in nature, which guarantees equality to citizens. They cultivate roots and tubers like yam and cassava, which explains why most of their cuisines are pounded yam and garri eaten with vegetable soup of different variety (*oha, nsala, akwu, okazi* and *ofe owerri*), alongside fruits and seeds. Little wonder during the new yam festivals (Iri Ji), the harvest of yams is celebrated (Adeboyejo, 2018).

Regarding marriage in Igbo culture, there are four stages: The first stage is “knocking the door,” known as *Iku aka*. *The second stage is the visit of the groom with his family members to the woman’s family where her extended family members are supposed to give their consent. The third visit involves paying of bride price and collection of list for wedding items from the prospective in-laws. The fourth and*

final stage, called *Igba nkwu* or “wine carrying,” is the wedding itself; here, the groom will hide in the crowd and the bride will look for him and offer him a cup of palm wine to show everyone that he is the man. After this, the couple is blessed by family, friends and all present as celebration continues (Adeboyejo, 2018).

Built on *Igwebuike*, Igbo culture encapsulates various customs, practices and traditions of the people. It comprises ancient practices and modern concepts which have evolved due to external influences. Some of these customs and traditions are visual art, religious beliefs, birth, marriage and death rituals, use of language, music and dance forms, cultural attire, food and language or dialect. The Igbos express their culture through customs, beliefs, war, burial, social norms, religion, racial and social or material traits. They often seize every opportunity to educate the world about their rich culture and traditions through festivals of arts and culture (Obindigbo, 2020). For the Igbos, traditional education or philosophy includes moral and religious instruction that is meaningful to all (Osuagwu, 2006).

Ngas People of North Central Nigeria: A Historical Overview

Ngas or Angas is an Afro-asiatic language spoken by certain dwellers in North Central Plateau, Nigeria. They are said to have migrated from Bornu from where they passed through villages before settling in their present homes on the highlands of Plateau and splintered into sub-groups in Pankshin, Ampang, Amper and Kabwir. The major city of the Ngas people is Pankshin (Tolu, 2020). They have many festivals, such as *Pus Dung* which brings all Ngas sons and daughters from diaspora to celebrate cultural diversity and rendition. This is celebrated annually at Nefur Arena. Other such festivals are *Tsati Tar* or *Mos Tar*, the “Shooting the Moon,” which is celebrated during harvest to mark the end of the farming season and the beginning of a new season. The *Moslum* festival, which occurs around March or April, features the preparation of local brew *Mus* which the people use

in a ritual to ask for blessings from the gods for a bumper harvest. The masquerade, *Wong*, comes out during this event (Tolu, 2020).

As regards marriage rites, the people practice match-making. “The child then gets to know about this when they are fully grown. Paying for a wife involves farming for the eventual in-laws and this lasts for as long as the courtship lasts. Cakes of tobacco and salt are also offered to the girl’s father and mother respectively. There is no specific bride price here. Goats are also offered as part of the marital rites” (Tolu, 2020). Since it is difficult to separate a people’s religious life from their social life, the historical and social life of the Ngas man reveals that they are deeply religious people. Ngas people are divided into Hill Ngas (Pankshin LGA) and the Plain Ngas (Kanke LGA) (Gyang, 2020).

They, however, have similar beliefs and practices with few variations in one village or the other. Shikrot is the worldview of the Ngas people. Most inhabitants of Pankshin and Kanke Local Government Areas in North-Central geopolitical zone are Ngas by tribe. While Christianity is currently the major religion there, there are few Muslims and pockets of those who still practice African Traditional Religion (ATR). The rural population still practices extended family system and common farming activities as well as animal husbandry. The *Ngolong* Ngas is the paramount traditional ruler in the two LGAs who superintends over the traditional affairs of the Ngas populace (Gyang, 2020). *Shikrot* sums up the ontology or philosophy of the Ngas people.

Native Communication in Igbo Culture: Viewpoints from *Igwebuike* Philosophy

1. Dissemination of Information: Announcements concerning public or community works, duties or responsibilities of the collective citizenry are carried. Defaulters in the community often faced automatic sanctions. The traditional authority could send certain

groups of people or individuals to make announcements or disseminate information about upcoming events. The news takes the form of passing information about new or impending events which are of importance to the community (Akakuru, Nwokedi & Edi, 2015).

2. Advertisement, Public Relations and Entertainment:

Advertisement was carried out through displaying products on a table, tree stump or flay pole, peripatetic hawkers and vendors. The merchants often sang, accompanied by drumming while naming the product for sale. In *Igwebuiké* philosophical thought of communication, Public Relations (PR) was achieved through person-to-person or on a person-to-organisation basis, where the individual tries to promote the image of his organization through singing. Entertainment was done through music, dance and drama, which were carried out either free of charge or paid for in some circumstances. It could also take the form of performances and announcements that were made to enhance communication in the community to a greater level (Akakuru, Nwokedi & Edi, 2015).

3. Education: In Igbo culture, educating the people is at the heart of all cultural expressions. As such, education is derived through informal means from parents to their children or through a more formal means where membership into certain societies through membership of other socio- cultural groups in the community could afford one the chance to learn (Akakuru, Nwokedi & Edi, 2015).

4. Signs and Symbols: In Igbo land, various forms of traditional communication include: idiophones, membranophones, aerophones, symbology. As instruments which produce sound without using an intermediary medium, idiophones produce sound when shaken, scratched, struck, pricked (pulled) or pressed with the feet. Examples are: gong, woodblock, wooden drum, bell and rattle. Membranophones are skin or leather drums which produce sounds through the vibration of membranes when beaten specially with carved sticks. As media which comprise flute family, whistle reed pipes, hones and trumpets, aerophones produce sound as a result of the vibration of a column of air. In *Igwebuiké* tradition,

symbolography are a descriptive representational device for conveying meaning. They are known as “uri” in Igbo, which stands for writings or painting on a wall or human body (Akakuru, Nwokedi & Edi, 2015).

5. Sound and Acoustics: In a paper which investigated the various non-verbal forms of cultural communication among Igbo people, Ahamefula and Odii found “that sound patterns and acoustic effects (extra linguistic) other than the sounds from the vocal tract system of man play a significant role in human communication, especially in cultural communication” (2014.p.35). The authors noted that aside from the ‘oja’ (flute), there are many other Igbo traditional instruments such ikoro (giant gong), igba (membrane drum), ekwe gong), ogene (metal gong) that are employed in cultural communication.

6. Ikpe Ekpere (Prayers): As a central part of the life of Igbo people, **Ikpe Ekpere, as prayer is called**, serves as a direct link to *ala mmuo* (the spirit land). In traditional Igbo beliefs and practices, morning prayer was carried out every day by the head of each household. As he does that, he offers *oji* (kola nut) to the different divinities (Ogbukagu cited in Duru, 2016). It is essential to communicate with the divine before one communicates with his/her fellow human beings. This is what *Igwebuike* philosophy stimulates.

7. Incantations: Incantation is a collection of special words that are either uttered or sung to have magic effect on someone. It also involves an activity through employing special spiritual passwords. In line with *Igwebuike* philosophy of communication, in Igbo thought, incantation belongs to an extra-mundane form of communication which takes place between the living and the dead, supernatural and Supreme Being. This mode of communication includes: rituals as ‘Igo-oyo’ (traditional worship), *Iwa oji* (breaking of kolanut) and *itu oza mmii* (pouring of libation). These are secret ways of giving or practicing traditional medicine for the purpose of love or imprisoning mosquitoes to stop them from biting the person making the incantation

in some localities, like Umunoha in Mbaitoli Local Government Area of Imo State (Duru, 2016).

Native Communication in Ngas Culture: *Shikrot* Philosophical Perspective

1. Being Persuasive: In Ngas culture, persuasiveness, referred to as *man le shitok den'en gurum* or *man shitok*, means talking to make an influence or impact on your audience. Usually, children would sit behind elders in order to listen so as to learn from them (Govwang, cited in Dyikuk, 2008). Ngas people believe that the ability to speak persuasively is a gift from God, although some people who admire orators can learn. Those with this gift are often asked to represent the people, especially in modern times. *Man shitok* connotes making a good speech. In olden times, those who were talented in public speech were sent on errands to deliver messages to the people. Due to lack of formal education, children imitated orators and mimicked them while playing (Jurshak, cited in Dyikuk, 2008). This was an essential element of socialization.

2. Active Listening: Ngas people hold good listening ability as a most cherished type of native communication. *Ten kom*, as it is referred to, means listening attentively with mind and heart alert. Children are not expected to speak when elders are discussing. They just listen and only reply when they have better knowledge of what their elders are talking about. In this custom, children are taught the basics of active listening, especially when they are before their seniors or visitors (Govwang, cited in Dyikuk, 2008). Also known as *Fot Shitok*, active listening is fundamental to the people's communication. When a child refuses to listen or pay attention to what is being said, we say, *gem de po fot kom ka*, which translates as – “this child does not pay attention and is stubborn” (Jurshak, cited in Dyikuk, 2008).

3. Saying the Truth: *Le zin* is speaking the truth in Ngas language. One is expected to speak the truth at all times. As one grows, one is taught to speak the truth all the time; as such, dishonesty is abhorred (Govwang, cited in Dyikuk, 2008). Truth-telling is symbolized by the

one-one facial tribal mark on each side of the chick. Because of this, the Hausa's nicknamed the Ngas as "*Aska daya, magana daya*" – One mark (on each side), one word. Children learn how to tell the truth from their parents. Sanctions such as flogging are consequences for lies. To buttress this point, a typical Ngas man would say: "*Shikok gak do mun la shi nyi*" – which literally translates as "we will only follow one thing (message) that is said (Jurshak, cited in Dyikuk, 2008). Saying one thing underscores truth in the culture. Usually, children would sit in *kantang* and are taught about the dangers of stealing or fighting over other people's property as these contradict truth.

4. Showing Respect: Respect in Ngas is, *pen warang, pen kun or nang kun*. Showing respect, especially to elders, is fundamental to many cultures in Africa. This is because doing so is also associated with the divine. Ngas people believe that "One who respects a human being, respects God." When a child shows lack of respect, it is concluded that such a child is not from a disciplined home. To this end, children are trained to respect their elders. As a sign of respect, children are expected to help someone who is older to carry load. At home, they are taught to wake up very early in the morning, greet their elders and run errands. As a mark of respect, a younger person is expected to be the last person at meals – he/she cannot leave the plate for his/her seniors, even if he/she is satisfied. Any member of the community who is elderly, not necessarily his/her parents or guardians, can discipline an erring child (Yeldung, cited in Dyikuk, 2008). Also, food is distributed to children according to their age. Disrespectful children are beaten squarely to serve as a deterrent to others. As such, showing respect is a non-negotiable native form of communication.

5. Sense of Followership: Because the leader comes across as a vanguard, gadfly and shining star, the led are expected to follow the leader. This underlines the importance of followership among the Ngas people as a form of native communication. "The idea of an individual standing alone on his or her on does not really make sense in Ngas thought" (Govwang, cited in Dyikuk, 2008). That is why

members of the community hold communality, submissiveness and followership in high esteem. Since togetherness enhances progress, followership is an invaluable traditional asset. In solidarity, respect, humility and search for the common good, the people follow the leader. This is closely connected to respect. In the light of respect for constituted authorities, the people are groomed to be loyal to superiors and all those in authority. As such, a leader must be followed and respected as a sign of loyalty, submission and good followership (Yeldung, cited in Dyikuk, 2008).

6. Traditional Entertainment: Another critical form of native communication is amusement or *nang shuar*. Since humour creates comic relief, excitement and eases tension, amusement or traditional entertainment helps people in the community to feel relaxed and enjoy a good life. In a typical Ngas community, there are comedians who entertain people at various occasions, such as traditional festivals, weddings and funerals. Although these comedians (clowns) are not trained, they, nonetheless, act in an impromptu manner to make people laugh to the admiration of women and children (Yeldung, cited in Dyikuk, 2008). *Nang shuar* by the amuser (*go tok barak*) is cherished by the people as a gift or talent. Usually, he demonstrates these abilities during funerals to make people forget the pain of their loss (Yeldung, cited in Dyikuk, 2008).

7. Sense of Community: Like other cultures in Africa, the Ngas have a high sense of communality expressed through the extended family system. For them, the individual realizes himself/herself in and through the community. That is why they live together, farm together (*nwok*) and eat as a family in groups of men, women and children. An individual's problem becomes a problem of the community. Women use common utensils and go to the farm as well as the stream in groups to fetch water and bathe their babies. This is usually accompanied by a melodious traditional song which inspires team spirit and keeps the body alive. For the Ngas people, "...co-operative community effort [is] considered necessary for the development of good character" (Fafunwa, 1975,p.24).

Recommendations: Common Grounds for Native Communication in *Igwebuike* and *Shikrot* Philosophical Thought

Although Moemeka (1998) suggested that African communalism is anchored on supremacy of community, sanctity of authority, respect for old age, usefulness of the individual and religion as a way of life, we shall consider common features in both the *Igwebuike* and *Shikrot* philosophies of native communication in the light of education, public relations, divine encounter and interpersonal relations:

- 1. African Traditional Education:** In *Igwebuike* philosophical rendering, the system of education created multiple personalities in the society. Traditional education included moral and religious instruction that was meaningful to all. It encapsulated the world view of the people which takes into cognizance language, culture, morals, proverbs, signs and symbols, even as it provided answers to the people's questions about life and afterlife (Osugwu, 2006). Children were taught by their parents in the kindred or extended family system. The use of proverbs, songs and dance was part of preparing children for a holistic appreciation of Igbo culture. Like the philosophy of Ohazurume (Umeogu, 2007), *Igwebuike* is the sum total of the people's realities, places, thoughts, language and actions.

In *Shikrok* philosophy of communication, children receive their earliest education from parents, guardians, elders or seniors within the kindred. For a holistic socialization, children are trained to respect their elders (Dyikuk, 2008). They are also taught about religious and moral values, especially during *Vwang* rite of initiation into adulthood. Although informal, this education was a gateway to who the child would grow to be in the future. Everything was done in love so as to groom the young into a descent and invaluable member of the community as well as a mature citizen. Therefore, it is evident that both *Igwebuike* and *Shikrot* worldviews hold African traditional

education of the young as a form of native communication dearly. This is aimed at preparing a person for the future. It is crucial for traditional rulers, religious leaders and stakeholders in the education sector to encourage parents/guardians as well as other custodians of culture to incorporate teaching African traditional education into contemporary curricular so as equip children with the love of language and culture and how to communicate same.

- 2. Public Relations:** We saw earlier that another vital form of native education in *Igwebuiké* philosophy is public relations, with its twin variables of advertisement and entertainment. The Igbos value performances and announcements because they are carried out to enhance communication in the community (Akakuru, Nwokedi & Edi, 2015). Through the use of signs and symbols, such as idiophones, membranophones, aerophones, symbology, local entertainers, performers and dancers communicate important messages and provide useful entertainment for the people. For example, sound and acoustics from local instruments, like Igba Membrane drum), Ekwe gong), Ogene (metal gong) (Akakuru, Nwokedi & Edi, 2015), are useful recipes for the social life of the people. “Traditional communication in Igbo land is a continuous process of information dissemination” (Akakuru, Nwokedi & Edi, 2015,p.17).

In like manner, the Ngas consider amusement or *nang shuar* as a useful vehicle for transmission of values. For this ethnic group, the comedian who performs at funerals is one endowed with the gifts of persuasion and humour so as to provide comic relief for people in moments of tension. As a traditional form of communication, public relations makes room for amusement or local entertainment which helps people in the community to feel relaxed and enjoy a good life (Dyikuk, 2008). Since public relations is a common denominator in the two cultures, in the face of decaying cultural values, African

academics from these extractions should drum support for revamping this important element of native communication in both localized and urbanized settlements. This will go a long way in connecting young people who may have lost their roots to be reconnected to the rich traditions of the past.

- 3. Divine Encounter:** In view of *ikpe ekpere*, Igbos believe that prayer is a direct link to *ala mmuo* (the spirit land) which is why morning prayer is offered by the custodian of the family, accompanied by *oji* (kola nut) and other divinations (Ogbukagu cited in Duru, 2016). *Igwebuike* philosophy is built around the idea of *Igwe*, God as the Supreme Being who holds all things in being and to whom other smaller gods like *amadioha*, the god of thunder, are subject to. Everything about the life of this people, from birth to death, is associated with divine realities.

In the same vein, the Ngas cannot understand life outside of religion. This is why, for instance, children are taught that God must not be excluded from education; the Plateau people hold that *Nen* is the supreme God, while other lesser ancestors and spirits are within the environment to whom libation is made in form of food and drink (*Mus or Pito*) (Gyang, 2020). From when a child is born and prayers are offered, to the time of death, the idea of God is central to all affairs. Another meeting point in the two cultures is the supremacy of God and dependence of man on him. What is more, it behooves sages and scholars to canvas for an acculturation of the good aspects of this overt reliance on God as a resource for a native form of communication that is inculturated, especially in the light of Christian faith.

- 4. Interpersonal Relations:** One of the finest expressions of *Igwebuike* philosophy is the concept of universal brotherhood and love. This form of native communication among the Igbos comes from the concept of the love of God who in turn

inspires human beings to love one another. This is why the extended family or kindred, *umunna*, practice communalism and fellow-feeling. This is also why events like the new yam festival (*iri ji*) and marriage ceremonies bring people together for common celebrations (Adeboyejo, 2018). All these point to interpersonal relations as ways of expressing native communication in Igbo society.

The sense of followership, traditional entertainment by comedians and dissemination of information by the town crier reveals various levels of traditional communication among Ngas people. Because interpersonal relations is paramount to this ethnic group, the people engage in certain common practices such as eating together in groups of men, women and children, using common utensils for fetching water, drinking from the well and engaging in commercial farming (Dyikuk, 2008). At every point, the people must interact. This common feature in Igbo and Ngas cultures underscores the place of traditional communication in Africa and the need to restore same in formal settings. The right place to start is the home, followed by local communities where community or traditional leaders are custodians of the traditions of the people.

- 5. Respect for Authority:** Igbo philosophy is built around *Igwebuiké* which connotes that the people ought to help one another to succeed. As the Igbo saying goes, “A child who washes his hands well eats with the elders.” When someone is of age or the person is married, he/she is respected by both the young and old alike. The person can even take part in discussions with his kinsmen and participate in meetings with elders. Respect is deeply rooted in truth, honesty and transparency. Interestingly, persons who have excelled in their fields, brought about development, or those who possess exceptional abilities, qualities and achievements are given titles (Nairaland, 2017).

The youths who are initiated into the “Ngas cult” are taught how to respect their elders, keep secrets, show love and make sacrifice for the good of the society. “In Ngas tradition like other cultures in Africa, elders are repertoires of knowledge who communicate or transmit those values to their children. In line with traditional African education, parents teach their kids how to eat, greet, dress and treat others with respect” (Dyikuk, 2019,p.11). In a society where traditional values of communication, like respect for authority are challenged due to advances in technology and loss of touch with cultural roots, it is expedient that a new model of African traditional education is developed to remind the young on the need to respect constituted authorities.

Conclusion

The study was able to demonstrate that dissemination of information, advertisement, public relations and entertainment, education, signs and symbol, sound and acoustics, **ikpe ekpere (prayers)** and **incantations** are veritable forms of *Igwebuike* philosophy of communication in Igbo thought. In like manner, the article provided evidence that being persuasive, active listening, saying the truth, showing respect, sense of followership, traditional entertainment and a high sense of community are elements of native communication in Ngas culture. Since the study set out in search for native communication in *Igwebuike* and *Shikrot* worldviews, a common ground was found. This was why revamping African traditional education, public relations, divine encounter, interpersonal relations and respect for authority in the communities under study, through educational policies, were recommended as useful ways of restoring native communication in the two cultures. This can be achieved if the requisite communication values are infused into primary and secondary curricula for education.

It is worth reiterating that traditional communication affects every aspect of an African’s life. These common grounds are not exclusive

to the Igbos or Ngas people of Nigeria, as they are also found in other parts of the global south. Be that as it may, in a society where homegrown solutions seem to be taking the centre stage in almost every part of the world, educationists of African extraction need to think out of the box to find lasting remedies to challenges in the African way. Indeed, native communication, like native intelligence which entails taking a helicopter view of contemporary issues, should propel various academics, especially media scholars and philosophers, to encourage the young not to lose their *Africanness* in a digital age which supplies all things Western.

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